

What's Michael?

by Makoto Kobayashi

The Ideal Cat





What's Michael?



The Ideal Cat



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Dark Horse Manga™

Lettering and Retouch:

Digital Chameleon

publisher
Masashi Kishimoto

series editor
Tim Bradstreet

series executive editor
Steven Smith for Studio Proteus

collection editor
Chris Warner

designer
Lara Schindler

art director
Liz Pflueger

English language version produced by
Studio Proteus and Dark Horse Comics, Inc.

Warrior Manga off vol. 16 The Great Cat

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This volume collects 96 pages of *Warrior Manga* from issue fifty-three through fifty-seven of the Dark Horse comic book series *Warrior Manga* book.

The artwork of this volume has been produced as a reproduction of the original Japanese edition to maintain its original language character.

Published by
Dark Horse Manga
A division of Dark Horse Comics, Inc.
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Berkeley, CA 94707

www.darkhorse.com

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First edition April 2004
ISBN 1-55171-125-6

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Printed in Canada





























GROWTH



OH...!



THAT'S
MICHAEL!

HELLO,
MICHAEL!



BUT THIS
CAT ISN'T
MICHAEL ...

MICHAEL'S
RIGHT
HERE.

WHICH
MEANS THIS
CAT HAS
TO BE...

MINI-MIKE!



YAH!!
MINI-MIKE'S
GETTING
SO BIG
NOW!

YEAH,
HE'S
NOT SO
"MINI" ANY
MORE!

TEE
HEE
HEE!

MINI-MIKE
IS ALMOST
GROWN UP!

BUT HE'S
STILL MICHAEL
AND POPO'S
BABY!



MICHAEL'S
FAVORITE
SNACK IS
DRIED
SARDINES.

MNCH
MNCH



POPO
WOULDN'T
EVEN DREAM
TO BURY
THEM.



BUT SINCE
MINI-MIKE IS
MICHAEL'S
SON, HE
LOVES DRIED
SARDINES,
TOO!



POPO
LOVES
MILK.

SLP
SLP
SLP



MICHAEL'S
STRAIGHT
EDGE--HE
WON'T TOUCH
THE STUFF.



BUT MINI-MIKE
IS POPO'S SON,
SO HE LOVES
MILK, TOO.

LAP
LAP
SLRP



MICHAEL
ENJOYS OTHER
SEAFOOD LIKE FISH
PASTE ROLLS, FAUX
CRAB, AND DRIED
BONITO FLAKES.

DRY CAT
FOOD, BUTTER
OR CHICKEN
BREAST IS NOT
FOR HIM!

POPO'S
DELICATE PALATE
ALLOWS HER TO
APPRECIATE
DRY CAT FOOD,
BUTTER AND
CHICKEN BREAST.

SO OF
COURSE FISH
PASTE ROLLS,
FAUX CRAB AND
DRIED BONITO
FLAKES ARE NOT
FOR HER!

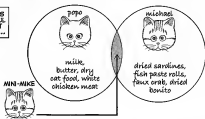


BUT MINI-MIKE
IS MICHAEL
AND POPO'S
SON, SO...



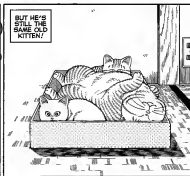
...HE EATS DRIED
SARDINES, FISH PASTE
ROLLS, FAUX CRAB,
DRIED BONITO FLAKES,
MILK, DRY CAT FOOD,
BUTTER AND CHICKEN
BREAST!

AS THIS
HELPLESS
CHART
SHOWS...



...MINI-MIKE
WILL EAT
ANYTHING!





THE UGLY KITTEN

ONCE UPON
A TIME, THERE
WAS A MOMMA
CAT WHO HAD
FIVE BEAUTIFUL
KITTENS. "WHAT
ADORABLE KITTENS
I HAVE!" THOUGHT
MOMMA CAT.
"WHAT A HAPPY
MOMMY AM I!"



BUT,
OH DEAR!
ONE OF THE
KITTENS WAS
NOT SO
BEAUTIFUL
AFTER ALL!





MOMMA CAT
FROWNED,
AND SAID:



"MY
YOU ARE
AN UGLY
KITTEH!"



ALL
THE UGLY
KITTEH'S
SISTERS
AND
BROTHERS
MADE FUN
OF HIM.

NYA-
NYAA!
UHHHGLY!

UGLY
KITTEH!
MOYAH!



BUT THE UGLY KITTEH DIDN'T
SEEM TO MIND. HE JUST KEPT
ON WAGGING HIS LITTLE TAIL
AND LOVING HIS MOMMA CAT
VERY MUCH!

WERF
WHUF
WHUF!



STOP
BOUNCING
AROUND
LIKE
THAT!

SADLY,
MOMMA
CAT ALWAYS
SEEMED TO
BE ANGRY
WITH HIM.

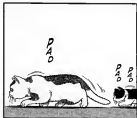


ONE DAY,
MOMMA
CAT WAS
TEACHING
HER
KITTEHS
HOW TO
HUNT.

YOU HAVE TO
LEARN TO MOVE
WITHOUT MAKING
A SOUND!
UNDER-
STAND?

YES,
MAMA!

YES,
MAMA!









"MUKASHI,
MUKASHI,"
AS THE
JAPANESE
FOLK TALES
GO, THERE
WAS A YOUNG
DOG NAMED
"URASHIMA
BEAR-O."

"ONCE
UPON A
TIME"

URASHIMA BEAR-O



ONE DAY,
URASHIMA
BEAR-O
HAPPENED
UPON A
GANG OF
MONKEYS ON
A BEACH,
TORMENTING
A HELPLESS
KITTEN.



"HEY, YEW
MONKEYS,
GIT LOST!"
SAID BEAR-O,
BUT THE
MONKEYS
DIDN'T STOP.
"IF YOU WANT
US TO GO
AWAY, GIVE
US SOME
MONEY,"
THEY SAID.

BEAR-O
GAVE THE
MONKEYS
ALL THE
COINS HE
HAD, AND
THE KITTEN
WAS
SAVED!















THE PERFECT SHOT

KENJI
MAHASHI.
TWENTY-EIGHT.
FREELANCE
CAMERAMAN.

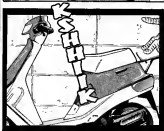
HE SEEKS
THE PERFECT
SHOT THAT WILL
CAPTURE THE
TRUE NATURE
OF CATS.
THEIR VERY
ESSENCE.



TODAY, AS
EVERY DAY,
HE IS STALKING
THE STREETS IN
SEARCH OF HIS
IDEAL SUBJECT—
THE WILD
ALLEY CAT!



YES...
THE
PERFECT
SHOT!









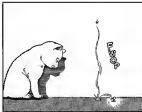




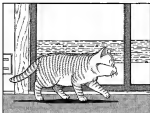
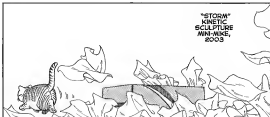




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WITH ROSES"
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"CRUSHED POTATO
CROQUETTE"
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HMM...

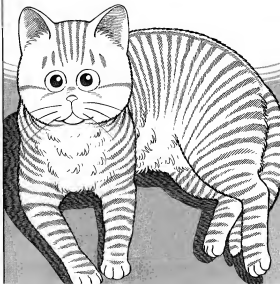


HMM...





THE THREE AMIGATOS

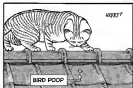




JERRY: 24 (H CAT YEARS)
STORE CAT
ALIAS: MOUSTACHE!







MICHAEL: 25 (ON CAT YEARS)
HOUSE CAT
ALIAS: YOMLERY!



AND SOME CALL THEM...



...THE THREE AMIGATOS! (ORIGINAL NAME)



EVERY EVENING
THESE THREE TOUGHS
SLINK TOGETHER INTO THE
GLOOMY SILENCE OF THE
LOCAL CEMETERY,
AND THEN--





THE END

RETURN OF THE THREE AMIGATOS!

JERRY!

MICHAEL!

PLATO!

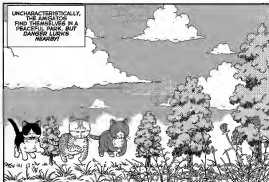


SPEAK THEIR
NAME WITH FEAR...

**THE THREE
AMIGATOS!**



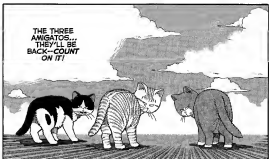
UNCHARACTERISTICALLY,
THE AMIGATOS
FIND THEMSELVES IN A
PEACEFUL PARK, BUT
GANGSTER LURKS
NEARBY!

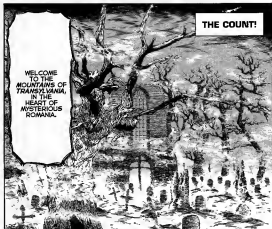














THE
COUNT



HE FEARS
NEITHER
GARLIC NOR
CROSSES.

HE IS AN
UNSTOP-
PABLE
FRIEND!







SR...UH...
SORRY
TO HAVE
BOTHERED
YOU.



SR...UH...
SR...UH...

SORRY
TO HAVE
BOTHERED
YOU

THE COUNT,
DEADLIEST
VAMPIRE OF
THEM ALL, IS
TERRIFIED—

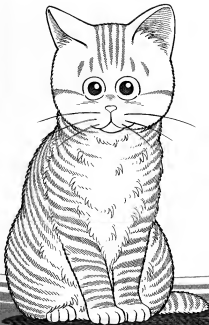
--OF CATS! SO SCARED,
IN FACT, THAT HIS JAW
BECAME UNHINGED!
(NOW I'M READY!)



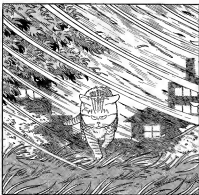
POPP
POPP
POPP



THE IDEAL CAT



unbowed
by rain,
unbowed
by wind...



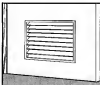
unbowed
by rats,
unbowed by
roaches...



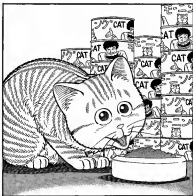
Upon your return from the fields, clean your paws before entering your home.



Always use the bathroom for your needs, and remember to flush.



Complain not
of the sameness
of your diet.



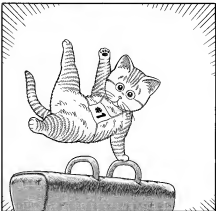
Complain
not if you
are alone
for a
weekend.



*Clean up
after you
play.*



*Above all,
be the best
cat you
can be!*



This is
the cat
I wish
to own.

APOLOGIES
TO KENJI HIYAZAWA
FOR HAVING MICHAEL
PARODY HIS GREAT POEM
"AME NI MO MAKEJU"
("UNBOWED BY RAIN").
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SABA
CASTLE,
ON THE
JAPANESE
ISLAND OF
KYUSHU.

THE NABESHIMA AFFAIR



THREE OF A KIND



*COMPLETED WINNING HAND



"A 'STRAIGHT' RUN OF THESE





HEARING
THE
TRAGIC
NEWS,
MATASABURO'S
WIFE...

OH,
HATE-
FUL
NABE-
SHIMA...!



MAI-
KERU
...!

AVENGE
OUR DEATHS!

AROWA
...!



CHAKK

YOWRR!



MAI-
KERU
...!



MAI-
SHIMA
...!

YOU'LL
PAY!



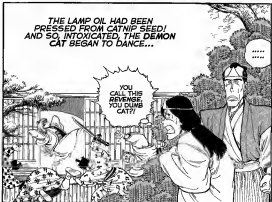
A FEW
DAYS LATER,
MAI-KERU
DISAPPEARED
FROM
MATASABURO'S
ESTATE.







**THE LAMP OIL HAD BEEN
PRESSED FROM CATNIP SEED!
AND SO, INTOXICATED, THE DEMON
CAT BEGAN TO DANCE...**



MISS IMAMURA'S
KITTY JIRO WAS
A PERFECT CAT,
ADORED BY ALL
HER FRIENDS AND
CUSTOMERS.

JIRO



JIRO!
HOW DO
YOU DO?

WEL-
COME!

JIRO WAS
SWEET TO
ALL HER
CUSTOMERS.

MROW!

HE WAS FAR
TOO POLITE TO
JUMP UP ON HER
COFFEE SHOP
TABLES.



AND HE
WAS BEST
OF FRIENDS
WITH MISS
IMAMURA'S
LITTLE BUNNY,
MAMU.



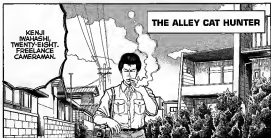








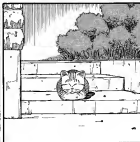














OOOH!
WHAT A
CUTESY-
WOOTZY
PUSSY-
WUSSY!!!

LEAVE
TAKE
YOUR
PICTURE!!



WAIT!
NO!!

DON'T
RUN AWAY
FROM ME!!



SHOOTING THE
WILD ALLEY CAT...
THE CHALLENGE
CONTINUES!



*Maru, Male,
Age Unknown*



Meet Maru. My wife's family keeps Maru back at the family manse. And of course he's the model for Shinnosuke (Bear).

Now, I don't know what I've done to earn Maru's ire, but if I so much as approach him, even with a friendly smile on my face, he bares his teeth and snarls like crazy. And I wind up running full tilt for fifty meters or more

to get away. It's so bad that I have in fact never, not once, patted Maru on the head. My own daughter has yet to pet him.

Truth be told, though, I get barked at wherever I go.

So why the heck do dogs despise me so?

— Makoto Kobayashi



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